



## STATE OF IDAHO

March 20, 2008

The Honorable James E. Risch  
President of the Senate  
Idaho Legislature  
Legislative Annex  
Boise, ID 83720

### **VIA HAND DELIVERY**

Dear Mr. President,

I have the honor to inform you that I have approved and am transmitting herewith the following bill to wit:

### **S1458**

EXCEPT THAT said bill making appropriations of money embracing distinct items has been item vetoed and disapproved within the time limited by law, the bill having been received in the Office of the Governor at the hour of 2:45 p.m. on March 14, 2008. The item disapproved is as follows:

### **On page 1 of the enrolled bill, line 26, the sum of "\$2,383,800"**

There is no question that we need an effective, community-based substance abuse treatment system in Idaho. There also should be no question that I support providing adequate public resources for treatment. However, the item vetoed in this bill goes far beyond the scope of what state policy makers had in mind when our treatment program was created or what Idaho taxpayers should be expected to accept.

The federal grant that originally put the state on this path was accepted on the premise that the state's financial responsibility for the treatment program would total \$7 million a year at the conclusion of the three-year grant cycle. This legislation provides more than twice that much money without having had the time or opportunity to develop full and reliable data on the benefit of the existing investment.

It has been my consistent position that such investments must be justified over time by results. It is no more than fiscally responsible and prudent to limit funding to the level of the original federal grant until clear data are available and the program's benefits and shortcomings can be accurately assessed.

**President Risch**

**March 20, 2008**

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What's more, the federal grant was designed as a tool to develop "access to care" and provide an incentive for building community resources to provide services to those in need. Despite these good intentions, the program has become an unfunded mandate providing state funds to directly provide treatment. The community resources have not been built.

In addition, there are serious questions about how some of the federal grant funding was used – questions about the potential misuse of funds for patients' health needs beyond treatment. Those questions alone cast doubt on the wisdom or propriety of committing state taxpayer dollars to so dramatically expanding the program.

Finally, let me point out that the line vetoed in this bill does not impact the existing state funding for drug treatment.

As Always – Idaho, "Esto Perpetua"

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C.L. Butch Otter". The signature is stylized with a large, looping "C" and "L" at the beginning, followed by "Butch" and "Otter" in a cursive script.

C.L. "Butch" Otter  
Governor of Idaho